DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 371 890 PS 022 519

AUTHOR Silvern, Joan, Ed.
TITLE A Practitioner's Notebook.
INSTITUTION Family Resource Coalition, Chicago, IL.
REPORT NO ISSN-1041-8660
PUB DATE 91
NOTE 21p.
PUB TYPE Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT Family Resource Coalition Report; v10 n2 1991

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome; *Change Strategies; Community Programs; Coping; *Family Programs; Government Role; Grandparents; Personnel Policy; Program Descriptions; *Program Improvement; Public Policy; Social Services; Television Viewing; War
IDENTIFIERS *Family Resource and Support Programs; *Family Support

ABSTRACT

This newsletter issue focuses on strategies for program workers to help enhance family support. The newsletter includes the following articles: (1) "'But What Should I Way?': Five Principles To Help Families Deal with Television"; (2) "Shaping the Future--How to Build Partnerships with Local Community Foundations"; (3) "Family Support: An African American Tradition"; (4) "F.E.M.A.L.E.: Support and Advocacy for At-Home Mothers"; (5) "Flexibility in the Workplace: Profiles of Innovative Massachusetts Companies"; (6) "A City Grapples with Family Support: Seattle's 'Family Support Opportunities for Action'"; (7) "AIDS: The Reality in All Our Lives"; (8) "The Volunteer Payoff: Getting as Well as Giving"; (9) "Grandparents Parenting Grandchildren"; (10) "Supporting What Works"; (11) "Operation Desert Storm and Desert Shield: Families Coping with the Realities of War"; and (12) "Attracting Participants and Money: A 10-Step Marketing Plan for Family Resource Programs." In addition, the newsletter contains a statement from U.S. Representative Pat Schroeder, appointed chairwoman of the House Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families, on the creation of policies and services that are more family-friendly, efficient, and effective in bringing about genuine change. (HTH)

FAMILY RESOURCE COALITION report

Volume 10, Number 2—1991

A Practitioner's Notebook

"But What Should I Say?"

Five Principles to Help Families Deal with Television

Once upon a time, children acquired knowledge of the world in a gradual, controlled way. They learned how to behave by watching adults. Their parents taught them about practical affairs and moral values (but not about the kinds of things that happen behind closed doors). Even after they started school, their developing reading skills restricted them, more or less, to stories and facts deemed suitable for their age level.

Instead of a gradual petallike unfolding, today's children are flung headfirst down the rabbit hole of adult knowledge. The main reason is...television. As author Joshua Meyrowitz put it in a recent issue of Media&Values magazine, "Television destroyed the system that segregated adult from child knowledge, and separated information into year-by-year slices for children of different ages...TV takes our children across the globe before parents give them permission to cross the street."

What children lack and most adults possess, however, is the ability to distinguish between reality and fantasy. Young viewers don't have the experience to tell the difference between the continuing drama and trauma of soaps, action adventure shows and sitcoms, and the day-to-day routine that most grown-ups live (and that their childhood should be preparing them for). Without proper guidance, television may encourage children to grow up dissatisfied with lives less exciting and glamorous than the TV heroes they admire—and avoid handling problems and conflicts that can't be solved in 22 minutes.

Parents are often advised to watch television with their kids and talk to them about what they see. But the task is overwhelming. Many parents aren't home to monitor the episodes of *G.I. Joe* and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* that their children absorb with afterschool snacks. They can't watch each TV set in a multiscreen house, spend hours viewing the television in a children's bedroom, or control the cable channels that change with each click of the remote.

Most would-be adult TV monitors have another problem as well: They don't know what to look for. And even when they see something that disturbs them, they don't always know what to say. Most of all, they don't know how to capture children's attention from the seductive embrace of the flickering images long enough to make a point about the scene or dialogue that's already flashed by.

Creating a family of be-your-own media critics is the answer to this challenge. With appropriate training, most parents can learn both to recognize problems with television and pass that knowledge on to their children. But this kind of parent-child interaction is only the means. The true goal is media-literate families, with both parents and children not only able but eager to pursue their own internal dialogues that interpret and demystify the media they see and hear.

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ISSN 1041-8660

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The following five principles of media literacy can help parents move beyond saying, "I don't like that show because it's too violent" or "Can't you watch something educational?" Once learned and assimilated they can be applied to any viewing situation and help turn any family into more knowledgeable—and selective—TV viewers.

1. People are Smarter than Television

No one does or believes everything they see on television, and both children and adults can learn to be consciously skeptical of what they see. Making connections with the activities of everyday life is probably the easiest way to alter or enhance the messages of television without interfering with children's favorite shows. It's based on the concept that everyone has filters that affect their reception of messages. The idea, then, is to develop similar filters in children that cause them to think of other things—real life things— when they see a McDonald's commercial or "bedroom kissing." A parent who, for example, uses a scruffy woman on *The Cosby Show* as a springboard for discussing the homeless is helping children exercise their own ability to make connections with things in everyday life. Once learned, this technique can help children use TV as a tool to expand their world—so that they want to do more reading, play more games, do more creative school work, and find they really are smarter than the TV.

2. TV's World is not Real

Children, particularly girls and boys under seven, are especially vulnerable to the illusion that the events portrayed on television are real. According to developmental theory, it's not until about the second grade that children develop the intellectual ability to tell the difference between what is real and what is imaginary. Parents who learn to casually pull out bits of information about laughtracks and the mashed potatoes that masquerade as ice cream in commercials have all made progress in breaking the video spell and persuading their children to be skeptical about what they see.

3. TV Teaches that Some People are More Important than Others

It takes a little practice to learn to notice the preponderance of white male interviewees on Ted Koppel's *Nightline* or the almost total invisibility of Hispanics, Asians, Native Americans, and other minorities in the rest of the TV schedule. But a closer look demonstrates an uncomfortable fact: On the whole, TV presents a generally male and white perspective on the world. Everyone else is less important and therefore much more likely to get killed or be victimized.

Parents who talk back to their television sets have the best chance of making their children sensitive to these issues and reminding them of this questionable picture of reality. A running parental commentary on the impossible figures of commercial models, housewives who talk to their toilet bowls, and beer-guzzling sports heroes—all can help children avoid taking TV's unrealistic world for granted.

4. TV Keeps Doing the Same Things Over and Over

Children can learn to spot the techniques, the conventions, and the mannerisms—from women whose bedtime make-up is always perfect to the use of scary music—that appear over and over in shows. Once again, the parent who can make a game out of TV watching can teach media literacy before children even know it. Count the times the music changes during the action climax of a favorite dramatic show or how various camera angles are used during a car chase scene. A child who can recognize deliberate production decisions is well on the way to being a media-literate consumer.

5. Somebody's Always Trying to Make Money with Television

The Ninja Turtle/Strawberry Shortcake mania that afflicts so many families is easier to avoid when parents and children know how to question television's role in eliciting these crazes. Understanding TV's emphasis on the bottom line is the place to start. Everything we see on TV is concocted to attract the largest audience with the highest possible disposable income. In a real sense, nothing else matters.

A few casual questions and answers can help parents make these facts obvious to youngsters: Why does Nike Air Jordan advertise on basketball games but not on *Designing Women?* What kind of shows advertise beer instead of household products? And so on.

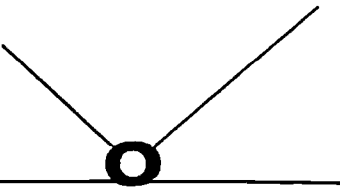
With a little experience, families can try predicting the types of commercials that might be expected on certain shows. Evaluate the accuracy of predictions and discuss the results. This is a great activity for younger children because it helps them identify when commercials start and end, a basic skill for young viewers.

Both parents and children benefit by learning—and remembering—that networks, TV stations, and cable all make their money by selling commercials. It would be more accurate to say that the shows exist to sell audience (that's all of us) to the sponsors.

It's important for every family member to understand that just about everything we see on TV is impacted by someone's desire to make money. Assume there are no pure motives. Even the news is influenced by commercial constraints, with the stiff competition for ratings at the top of the list.

Although most of these five basic concepts can be assimilated in some form by any child old enough to turn a television dial, many adults never grasp them. All the more reason to start teaching these concepts to both children and their parents. When young viewers turn around and start pointing out TV's lapses to Mom and Dad, the battle for media awareness will take a major step forward. And perhaps the latest heavily advertised gimmicks—from jeans and athletic shoes to Nintendo game cartridges—won't seem nearly so appealing. □

The preceding article was adapted by Rosalind Silver, Editor, from "But What do I Say? Five Important Ideas to Teach Your Kids about TV" by Jay Davis, and other material from the Fall 1990/Winter 1991 issue of Media&Values *magazine. The Center for* Media and Values *is a member of the Family Resource Coalition.*



Families and Television: Taking the Next Step

For a wealth of resources about how families can handle the media in their lives, order "Children and Television: Growing up in a Media World," the #52–53 issue of Media&Values magazine ($5 single copy/call for quantity discounts). Or the issue is free in the Media Literacy Workshop Kit™ *Parenting in a TV Age* ($17.95). The kit also includes leaders' guides and handout masters for four two-hour group sessions on issues of children and TV. Excellent for parenting groups or family life education programs. Order from the Center for Media and Values, 1962 S. Shenandoah, Los Angeles, CA 90034 213/559-2944. An educational not-for-profit membership organization, the Center empowers the public by publishing educational curriculum materials and other resources for critical awareness about media. □

■ by Congresswoman Pat Schroeder

**** Working for Families

Pat Schroeder, chairwoman of the Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families: U.S. House of Representatives

I was especially honored and delighted with my appointment—by the Speaker of the House in February—as chairwoman of the Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families. My concern for family and children's issues drove me to run for Congress nearly 20 years ago.

Back then, family issues were virtually nowhere to be found in policy discussions. That has changed. It's now okay to talk about children and families, and everybody has jumped on the bandwagon and is beating the drum. I am eager to step up that tempo among the 36 members of this Select Committee, and to push for long overdue action. I see this Select Committee as the conscience of the Congress and fully intend that it will continue to carry out that responsibility.

When the Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families was created in 1983, it was charged with assessing the conditions of American families and recommending ways to improve their circumstances. The Select Committee's work has contributed time and again to legislative initiatives designed to improve the economic security, health care, nutrition, childcare options, and general well-being of American families and children. In the face of actions during the last decade that dismantled supports or otherwise made it impossible for families to obtain needed assistance, we may have succeeded only in keeping even.

Over the past 20 years, the American family and workplace have undergone unprecedented changes. We are now firmly in an era in which vast numbers of families struggle day in and day out to balance the responsibilities of their family and work lives. In 1965, less than 40 percent of women were in the workforce; today, nearly 60 percent of women work. More than one-half of mothers with children under the age of six work outside the home, and 74 percent of mothers with children over age six were in the paid labor force in 1988. Two-thirds of working fathers with children under the age of 18 have working wives, and while the vast majority of single-parent families are maintained by mothers only, just over one million families were maintained by single fathers.

In the majority of families with children, the adults who are present in the home work. They have to work because the cost of living is so high and the real incomes of moderate- and middle-income families have declined since the mid-1970s.

As a result, the poor have gotten poorer and moderate- and middle-income families have watched their security erode, many living but a paycheck or an emergency away from disaster. As I've talked with parents across the country, many have told me that they are moving backward. Some 20 percent of children now live in poverty, 37 million Americans have no health insurance, our human services are a mess, and the economic recession has only created more bad times for families.

Our national priorities never were very aligned with the needs of our families and society as a whole, but certainly now have fallen far out of step. The Federal government has failed to make needed investments in successful and cost-saving interventions, and the implementation of many policies has proven distinctly unfriendly to families. In my new role as chairwoman, the Select Committee will focus on programs that work and on the creation of policies and services that are more family-friendly, efficient, and result in practices that make a difference.

Already we know that early and cost-effective prenatal care can reduce infant mortality and the incidence of low birthweight births. Yet, we fail to invest a few hundred dollars in such care for each needy pregnant woman. Instead, annually tens of thousands of babies continue to die and we spend $2 billion to care for critically ill infants. WIC, the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children, improves vital nutrition and birth outcomes and can give us a return of $3 for every $1 invested. Yet, only about half of those who are eligible can participate. Head Start and other comprehensive early childhood education interventions are among our best investments to ensure school readiness, but an even smaller proportion of eligible children and families receive services. This is neither smart government nor good business. I intend to keep pointing that out every chance I get.

In the first hearing that I convened upon becoming chairwoman, the Select Committee focused on creating a more family-friendly tax policy that would put money back in the pockets of families by easing their tax burden. The sad fact is that the tax code has failed to keep up with the cost of raising children. Literally every parent I talk with tells me so—loudly and clearly.

Another hearing has explored ways to provide more family friendly health care through increased availability of comprehensive services and more efficient service delivery. Families seeking immunizations and health check-ups for their children, nutrition assistance, and other basic supports should not have to traipse around the countryside, fill out multiple forms that ask for the same information, and be denied assistance because of bureaucratic hurdles they can't jump. Recently, the Committee also heard from corporate leaders and researchers about the need for attitude changes and greater workplace flexibility to create a family-friendly workplace culture for fathers.

In the upcoming weeks and months, the Committee's agenda will focus on adolescents—the risks they face by virtue of being teens in today's society—and how parents and others can successfully communicate and work with young people to help ensure their safety and healthy development. The prevention and reduction of family crises resulting from child abuse and family violence, substance abuse, crime, and homelessness will also continue to command our special attention.

Finally, we will engage all sectors of our society in developing policies that will benefit all of America's children. Families, government, and the private sector must all be involved in, contribute to, and be held responsible for solutions. □

Patricia Scott Schroeder, Democrat, represents the First Congressional District of Colorado and is the Dean of the Colorado Congressional Delegation. She is the most senior woman in Congress and the Chair of the Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families as well as a member of the House Armed Services Committee, the House Judiciary Committee, and the House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service. She is one of only four women to chair a House committee in this century. During the 101st Congress, Mrs. Schroeder made family issues, women's health issues, and defense burden-sharing her top priorities: she is the leading House sponsor of the Family and Medical Leave Act.

Contact: Congresswoman Pat Schroeder, the Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families, Room 385, House Office Building-Annex 2, Washington, DC 20515 202/226-7660.

■ by Linda Lipton

Shaping the Future– How to Build Partnerships with Local Community Foundations

Back in 1913, Ohio banker Frank Goff wanted to make sure that money set aside for charitable purposes through wills and estates would be spent wisely years after the decedents had passed away. He felt that a new type of organization was needed to make such philanthropy more effective —that it was necessary to "cut off as much as is harmful of the dead past from the living present and the unborn future."

With these purposes in mind, Goff formed the Cleveland Community Foundation. Individual bequests from a large number of estates were pooled, the funds were managed by a committee of bank representatives, and the interest earned on the investments was distributed by a group of civic leaders who had been appointed because of their knowledge of the local community and its needs.

Today, Goff's idea has spawned over 400 community foundations with more than $6 billion in assets, and annual grants of approximately $500 million. In most cases, the members of the community foundation's distribution committee are selected not by donors or their friends, but by individuals who hold leadership positions in the courts and in private institutions such as chambers of commerce and universities.

Community foundations represent an important segment of the funding community, due in large part to the inherent flexibility of their original design. One commentator on the movement has captured the essence of a community foundation's sensitivity to changing needs by describing their donors as "individuals who agree to support purposes they cannot know, purposes that are certain to be changed in ways they cannot anticipate, by a group of people whose identities and commitments are also certain to change."[1]

If you plan on working with community foundations in your area, there are several aspects of their operation to which you should be sensitive.

- **Some money is donated with strings and some is not.**

Donors provide money to the endowment of a community foundation in two main fashions: It can be given with restrictions, designating particular types of subject areas or issues on which it can be expended, and/ or requiring the participation of living donors in the selection of grantees. Donors can also decide to provide money to the community foundation without any strings attached, leaving it up to staff and board of the community foundation to develop grantmaking priorities and choice of grantee organizations. The balance between restricted and unrestricted funds will determine how many new agendas a community foundation can add to its list of priorities in meeting the needs of a diverse set of constituencies.

- **There is more to community foundation work than grantmaking.**

Many community foundations play an important role as convener. They view their mission, in part, to serve as a catalyst to bring groups together for first time conversations. Such meetings often lay the groundwork for productive coalitions whose members can pool their resources and work in unison to address complex community problems.

- **Support for individual grantees can come in many forms.**

You don't have to propose a time-limited demonstration project in order to garner community foundation support. While each foundation will vary in the degree to which they provide general operating support to nonprofit organizations, many see such grants as an important part of their responsibility to the community they assist. "Community foundations tend to be in the business of creating and supporting a network of services for the people in the communities they serve," says a senior staff associate at a large community foundation, so don't assume that only replicable model projects need apply.

A Resource of Great Potential

While their size, staffing, and internal structures vary greatly, these philanthropies have great potential for having a dramatic impact on human service organizations:[2]

- Because they are focused on a specific geographic area, community foundations have a mandate to become intimately knowledgeable about local problems and the grassroots organizations in their sphere of operation. They can take the opportunity to deal with issues in a comprehensive and integrated fashion, cutting across programmatic lines and looking instead at community-wide needs.
- The community foundation's local expertise can be funneled to national founders, offering the possibility for structuring joint ventures with philanthropies outside the local region; such partnerships can bring in new dollars to supplement those available to local groups.
- Unlike many other funders, community foundations are built to grow, bringing in new donors, both large and small, each year. With the prospect of an ever-increasing capacity to make grants, community foundations can become the cornerstone of a strong local funding base for grassroots organizations.

Resources for Those Who are New to Community Foundations

You can get the name and address of your local community foundation by writing or calling the Information Services Coordinator, Council on Foundations, 1828 L St. N.W., Washington, DC 20036 202/466-6512. This office can also give you additional background information on the scope of the community foundations field.

In order to develop a detailed profile of the community foundation that interests your organization, certainly contact it directly, but also visit your local/regional branch of the foundation resource library within the Foundation Center's nation[illegible] system. A network of over 180 cooperating libraries in all 50 states and abroad provide free access to core Center publications as well as background information on specific foundations. Call or write the Center for the address of your local network library: 79 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10003-3050 212/620-4230.

For additional information on how your community foundation ranks on such issues as community responsiveness and minority representation, contact the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (NCRP). This group publishes studies on a range of philanthropic policy issues and also offers technical assistance to groups trying to expand and redirect funding resources in their local communities: NCRP, 2001 S St. N.W., Suite 620, Washington, DC 20009 202/387-9177.

PHOTO: WTTW/CHANNEL 11

The Chicago Community Trust is funding "Chicago Matters," a series on WTTW/Channel 11, with a three-year, $900,000.00 grant; each program addresses timely community concerns. During the second season, in which the focus was on children's issues, one of the broadcasts featured TV medical reporter Dr. Bruce Dan on "Protect Yourself: Teaching Your Children About AIDS."

How to Connect with Your Community Foundation

If you want a community foundation to become a long-term resource for your program, it is best to view the connection as a personal relationship. The effort required to build a partnership for the future will not be insignificant, but the investment can be well worth your time.

- **Do your homework first.**

As in most other segments of the funding community, there is considerable variety among community foundations. Don't make the mistake of assuming anything about the one in your area. Request a copy of the foundation's annual report, guidelines for funding, and any special publications it may have issued about its activities (newsletters, requests for proposals or specific funding initiatives, studies on particular area problems or issues).

After you have reviewed these materials, talk to your nonprofit colleagues. Find out what their experience has been in seeking funds from the foundation. Are there particular staff people who have been especially responsive? Does the written information match the manner in which they have been treated? Has the community foundation taken a leadership role in particular subject matter areas?

- **Don't wait for an invitation.**

Foundations invest in people they trust. They want to have confidence that the great idea contained in a written proposal will have a decent chance of being implemented. Trust, however, cannot be built overnight, so you need to take the initiative and introduce yourself and your agency to representatives of the foundation.

A variety of occasions can present themselves for getting acquainted: (1) Be sure you place the community foundation on any lists you have for sending annual reports, press clips, or other documents that capture the activities and accomplishments of your organization for public view. Don't assume that word of mouth or the newspaper will carry your periodic messages to a foundation staff person; add a note indicating why it is important for them to keep up to date on your work. (2) Arrange a meeting to learn more about the foundation's work. While some foundations discourage pre-proposal meetings, many are open to informal conversations if there are issues about funding priorities that you would like clarified or if you are soliciting input on the content of future projects without tying the discussion to submission of a specific proposal. Still others may be interested in giving you feedback on alternative designs for accomplishing your goals.

- **Offer to help.**

You may be able to be of critical assistance to your community foundation in its attempt to stay abreast of changing needs, to uncover gaps in services, and to discern opportunities for them to play a coordinating or leadership role in addressing current community problems. Perhaps your organization can serve on an advisory committee to the foundation; maybe you can assist them in putting together a luncheon group to discuss a problem of mutual concern; or consider whether there are meetings at your organization or within your larger network that might be of interest to a particular staff person at the foundation. In short, become a resource.

- **Friends can criticize each other.**

Community foundations have come in for their share of criticism. Some have been accused of failing to take on risky projects, others have been viewed as discouraging minority representation, and still others have been attacked as not being sufficiently accountable to the communities in which they provide funding.

The more prominent critics, such as Robert Bothwell of the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (NCRP), have suggested a variety of methods for addressing these concerns: conducting "never a grantee" focus groups to alert foundation representatives to potential grantees who have not applied or have been rejected in prior attempts, diversifying the composition of distribution committees to assure a better representation of all segments of the community in question, and publishing more detailed information on the projects funded and the population groups ultimately served.

Be sure that you are aware of how your community foundation has fared in national studies conducted by NCRP, and decide whether there are issues that remain to be tackled in your geographic area. If so, seek the counsel of other nonprofit colleagues in how to approach community foundation representatives about your concerns.

In a similar fashion, community foundations can teach you about agency shortcomings, pinpointing areas that need improvement and resources available for doing so. Technical assistance grants or dollars targeted exclusively for building the management capacity of your organization may be available with less paperwork involved than the regular grant-making process. A working relationship can and should be a two-way street, so be sure to alert your community foundation representative of your willingness to enhance your internal management capabilities.

- **When appropriate, consider applying for funds.**

If you have made an attempt to build a relationship with your community foundation, you will have learned whether and when it will be appropriate to apply for funding. By not putting the cart before the horse, you will have found that a slower and more planful approach provides a better basis for soliciting funds than dashing in with a good idea encased in a cold proposal. A community foundation has the potential for becoming a long-term partner for your organization; it deserves some special attention up front if that potential is to be achieved. □

Endnotes

1. HAMMACK, D. (1989). "Community foundations: The delicate question of purpose" in *An Agile Servant: Community Leadership by Community Foundations:* The Foundation Center, p. 24.
2. Mott Foundation Special Report: *Community Foundations: A Growing Force in Philanthropy* (1985), p. 5.

Linda Lipton is an independent consultant serving nonprofit and public organizations. Her current clients include major philanthropies and many human service organizations in the Chicago metropolitan area. Since graduating from the University of Pennsylvania Law School in 1974, she has worked at national, state, and local levels with service at such agencies as the Children's Defense Fund, the Chicago Community Trust, and the Family Resource Coalition (as its first Executive Director). She can be contacted at 725 Judson Ave., Evanston, IL 60202 708/864-3233.

■ by Karen E. Kelley

Family Support: An African American Tradition

Despite the fact that African Americans have been in this country for hundreds of years, service providers in a variety of fields are still struggling to find the most effective strategies for working with Black families. While much has been written about providing child welfare and treatment services, the literature does not provide us with similar guidance for the family support field. This article will explore some of the available information on Black families and offer suggestions for integrating that knowledge into programmatic efforts.

The first step in designing effective family support strategies for African American families must be to learn about their history and culture. In the search for that knowledge, one will find a range of opinions. In the second edition of *Black Families*,[1] for example, editor Harriette McAdoo summarizes different perceptions: "There have been major divisions within the field of Black family studies. The major disagreement has focused on whether or not Black families differ from non-Black families in any other way than the former's greater level of poverty. One view has held that Black families are what they are simply because they are poor: if poverty was removed, then there would be a convergence of values and structure between all families. Another view is that poverty, plus the experience of slavery and Reconstruction, have left an indelible mark on families that has existed to the present. Still another view is that Black families are unique because of the remnants of African culture that have been maintained and have adapted to discrimination."

McAdoo suggests that a true picture of African American families is most likely a combination of all these perspectives. The question for family support practitioners and policymakers is: What relationship should the culture, history, and experience of Black families have to family support programming?

The Key Role of Family Support Programs

Black families in this country are disproportionately poor. According to *The Status of Black Children*,[2] published by the National Black Child Development Institute in 1989, "Nearly one in two [Black children] are poor—three times the rate of white children. Tragically, the most vulnerable segment of the Black population, children under the age of three, are more likely than virtually any other segment of the American population to be poor: over 49 percent of these children live in poverty, according to the Census Bureau."

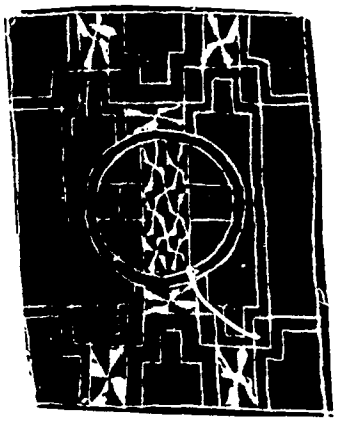
Of course, not all Black families live in poverty but it is likely that many of those who participate in family support programs are poor. It follows then that programs can respond by helping families to meet their basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter, and by ensuring that the health needs of children and families are met. In addition, family support programs must work with Black families to help them develop a plan for moving out of poverty to become self-sufficient. Creative solutions are needed for addressing the needs of Black families in impoverished communities who have few employment and training opportunities. Policymakers and advocates must continue to publicize the need for programs and services for those families who are greatly in need.

In searching for the key to serving Black families, we cannot ignore the impact of slavery. Scholars have documented the strong ties that Black families maintained throughout that period of history, despite the forced separations experienced by many of them. Strict child discipline practices have been traced back to slavery and tied to pure survival, and poignant stories are told of slave's first activities after being freed: finding one's children and family.

Perhaps one of the most interesting perspectives on the Black family looks at the traits and habits they have carried onward from Africa. No other ethnic group has been denied the link to their homeland in the way that African Americans have been. But despite the fact that slaves were not allowed to speak their language and members of tribes were separated to prevent communication, scholars such as Dr. Wade Nobles, Dr. Asa Hilliard, and Dr. Janice Hale-Benson document that Black people in this country still exhibit many African ways. These characteristics are evident in their values, traditions, child-rearing practices, and religious beliefs.

Family support programs must acknowledge that while formal slavery is over, racism and oppression have taken on different forms in the 1990s. African American adults meet racism on a daily basis and must prepare their children to deal with it as well. In his book, *Maggie's American Dream: The Life and Times of a Black Family*,[3] Dr. James Comer states, "Being Black in America is often like playing your home games on the opponents' court."

Family support programs can provide Black families with a refuge from the racist and unsupportive practices of the outer world. In the safe climate created by programs, parents can have the opportunity to explore solutions to the challenges of raising a Black child in a white society. Staff members must celebrate the rich cultural heritage of Black families and exhibit a capacity to develop trusting and empowering relationships.



"Something Inside So Strong"

The traits and survival techniques demonstrated by Black families are perhaps best described in Robert Hill's classic work, *The Strength of Black Families.*[4] Despite past and current writings about the many problems experienced by Black families—including lack of education, poverty, and teen pregnancy—Hill challenges the adoption of a totally deficit perspective. He asserts that "Examination of the literature on Black families reveals that the following characteristics have been functional for their survival, development, and stability:

- strong kinship bonds
- strong work orientation
- adaptability of family roles
- strong achievement orientation
- strong religious orientation

Although these traits can be found among white families, they are manifested quite differently in the lives of Black families."

Although family support programs are dedicated to building on the strengths of families, program providers often fail to look beyond the presenting problem (e.g., teen pregnancy) to find the many strengths that a family possesses. An understanding of and respect for cultural differences requires a relabeling of characteristics that may not be the same in other families. For example, the notion of "strong kinship bonds" discussed by Hill may seem confusing to staff people who work in family support programs. A home visit to a Black family may reveal that several generations reside in the household, and that some of those who are considered full-fledged family members are not blood relatives, but have been informally adopted as family.

Programs serving Black families must respond to this situation by providing a range of services for a variety of family members, and by respecting a family's rights to define the members of their unit. Only by building on these strengths does a family have an opportunity to realize its fullest potential in the context of their reality.

Black families have historically been dedicated to hard work and to caring for family. Hill quotes an earlier study conducted by Otto (1962) which identifies "an ability for self-help and the ability to accept help when appropriate" as a strength of Black families. Hill ties this tendency towards self-help to a strong desire to work and achieve. Family support programs, with their commitment and belief in self-help, are a natural fit for Black families.

Related to this strong work orientation is what Hill calls an "adaptability of family roles." Many proud Black families have always had both men and women working to support the family. He states that "Much of this role flexibility probably developed in response to economic necessities," and cites examples of older siblings caring for younger siblings so that parents could work, and the entrance of young teens in the labor market to "supplement the family income."

While the literature is replete with studies of poor achievement by Black children, Hill asserts that Black families indeed have high achievement expectations for their youngsters. Family support programs can capitalize on and nurture those high expectations even before children enter school. Activities for children must promote education as a means of future success. Teens must be encouraged to stay in school and be provided with positive Black role models who can serve as examples of the benefits of hard work and study. And Black parents must be given the tools to advocate on behalf of their children to ensure that they receive the necessary services and educational supports.

Finally, Hill states that "Blacks have been adept at using religion as a mechanism for survival and advancement throughout their history in America. During slavery, religion served as a stimulant for hundreds of rebellions that took place. It was also a major source of strength during the civil rights movement of the 50s and 60s." Despite a tendency of human service agencies to stay away from religion as a consideration in service provision, programs that work with Black families must recognize the shared cultural belief and reliance on a higher power among most African American peoples. Programs should look to families and the surrounding community to provide direction for the role that this expression of spirituality needs to play in the design and delivery of family support services.

Summary

Additional study is needed in order to document the most effective program design and service delivery strategies to use with Black families in family support programs. Efforts such as the Ounce of Prevention Fund's Black Family Project and the Family Resource Coalition's African American Caucus are important steps in that direction.

In her discussion of "Ethnicity and Family Support" in *America's Family Support Programs*,[5] Shirley Jenkins states that "the significance of the Black experience can be integrated into family support programs. The need to incorporate the target group's culture and ethos in program planning should be recognized. Such a goal may be already implicit in family support activities; if it is made explicit, the way may be opened for a variety of innovative approaches that will reach diverse populations."

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Karen E. Kelley is the Director of Training for the Family Resource Coalition. She is also Project Director for the Coalition's Family Support Act Training and Technical Assistance Project in Illinois, Florida, and Connecticut, and co-chair of FRC's African American Caucus. Karen was formerly a Program Manager for The Ounce of Prevention Fund where she coordinated the training and parent group services activities for 37 community-based family support programs.

Members of the Family Resource Coalition have launched an African American Caucus in an effort to integrate knowledge of Black family history and culture into family support programming. The Caucus, funded by the Lilly Endowment, will collect information on program and training models, hold regional meetings, participate in the Coalition's biannual conference, and publish a newsletter on African American family issues and family support programs.

Contact Karen at the Family Resource Coalition, 200 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 1520, Chicago, IL 60604 312/341-0900 or Mustafa Abdul-Salaam, Caucus co-chair, at The New Haven (CT) Family Alliance 203/786-5970.

■ by Martha M. Bullen

FEMALE: Support and Advocacy for At-Home Mothers

"A support group is being organized for women who have left paid employment to stay home with their children and are having difficulty making the transition. Formerly Employed Mothers At Loose Ends (FEMALE) will meet in the area."

With this advertisement, FEMALE made its first appearance in a suburban Chicago newspaper three-and-a-half years ago. Created as a support group for women who have interrupted their careers to raise their families, FEMALE is the only national organization to support women making transitions between paid employment and at-home mothering, and to advocate for women's family needs in and out of the workplace.

The group began in August, 1987 after Joanne Brundage, a postal worker, left her job because she was unable to find adequate daycare for her children. Faced with the loss of self-esteem, identity, and financial security that her job had supplied, she found herself depressed and unsure about her newfound role as a stay-at-home mother. After placing an ad in a local paper, Joanne found four other women who helped to get the group off the ground. Today, FEMALE has more than 700 members in the U.S., Canada, and France, and over 30 local chapters across the United States.

FEMALE provides opportunities for like-minded women to network with one another and to share ideas and information on how to maximize their personal growth and happiness during the at-home years. Members receive face-to-face support through a nationwide network of local chapters. Chapter involvement provides a core group of women who share friendship, concerns, and a sense of community. Local chapters feature regular monthly meetings with small group discussions and guest speakers, playgroups and babysitting co-ops, book discussion groups, "Moms' Night Out" activities and family social events, information on community resources, and support systems for members in times of personal need.

Members also receive a monthly newsletter, *FEMALE FORUM*, which features personal accounts of life at home, survival techniques, book reviews and author interviews, work/family issues, and a helpline.

FEMALE includes members from all facets of the working world—some came from fast-track professions, but many others worked in pink or blue collar jobs. Although members are from diverse backgrounds, they are united by the feelings they experience once they're at home—including isolation, loss of financial autonomy, and lack of respect from family, friends, and former coworkers.

Joanne Brundage comments, "Although we are primarily for at-home mothers, FEMALE is *not* opposed to women who work outside the home full-time. Many of our members work for pay in some capacity. We believe in respecting and supporting all mothers' choices involving work and family."

When the group originally started, it was known as "Formerly Employed Mothers At Loose Ends," because that's how many mothers felt after leaving the workforce. In May of this year, however, the organization decided to change its name to "Formerly Employed Mothers At The Leading Edge" because "at loose ends" no longer adequately described its members or the organization.

Joanne Brundage said, "We consider our members at the leading edge of the feminist movement in finding ways to balance family and work in their own lives." FEMALE members are also at the leading edge of a larger social trend—the Bureau of Labor Statistics has just reported that the percentage of women in the workforce has dropped (the first decrease since the government began keeping statistics on working women in 1948) as more and more women are choosing to stay home to raise their children.

Ms. Brundage feels that "At The Leading Edge" is also a better way of describing the group's committment to educating and motivating business and government to become more responsive to the needs of families. FEMALE's advocacy programs address improved and expanded childcare options, family leave policies, family-sensitive work options, and child-friendly public places.

One example of the group's leading edge activities is the Creative Work Alternatives Database, a pilot project in the Chicago area, which encourages businesses to offer part-time, flextime, and job-sharing opportunities. This database collects resume information from mothers who desire a flexible work arrangement, and then provides placement services to area businesses who are open to offering these types of employment positions. Upon successful establishment of this pilot program, FEMALE plans to expand the service to other metropolitan areas.

This all-volunteer organization offers a wide variety of leadership opportunities at all levels. FEMALE encourages its members to get involved and put their talents to good use by contributing to the organization's mission and making a positive difference in other women's lives.

Volunteer opportunities range from writing to public speaking, making use of secretarial, organizational and managerial skills, desk-top publishing, bookkeeping, and representing the group to the media. *The Leader's Edge*, another FEMALE newsletter which is published quarterly for local chapter leaders, aids in chapter planning and development and provides a forum for the exchange of ideas, questions, and concerns among leaders across the country.

Arlene Rossen Cardozo, author of the ground-breaking book, *Sequencing*, praised FEMALE's work and called it the only group of its kind in the nation. Cardozo stated, "FEMALE is doing impressive work in providing support, information, and a forum for communication for women during the years in which they are concentrating their energies on the raising of the next generation." □

Martha M. Bullen serves on the national board of FEMALE and is the at-home mother of two-and-one-half-year-old Claire. She previously worked as Marketing Manager for Bonus Books, a Chicago-based publishing company. Ms. Bullen is currently co-authoring a book for mothers at home entitled Motherhood Is My Career, *which will be published by Little, Brown in May, 1992.*

For more information, contact: FEMALE, PO Box 31, Elmhurst, IL 60126 708/941-3553. An annual membership is $20; it includes a subscription to FEMALE FORUM *and membership in a local chapter.*

■ by Elizabeth Rosseel

Flexibility in the Workplace: Profiles of Innovative Massachusetts Companies

Four Massachusetts employers, all cited in *Working Mother* magazine's 1990 list of "The 75 Best Companies for Working Mothers," are taking the lead in the work-family policy arena. While each of these companies rank childcare as an important family support, many other creative, less costly alternatives have emerged in the form of flexible benefit practices. These companies can well serve as models for other organizations seeking innovation and flexibility in the workplace.

STRIDE RITE: Cambridge

Stride Rite Corporation, a footwear manufacturer employing over 3500, pioneered one of the nation's first on-site employer-sponsored childcare centers in 1971. Last year, the company broke new ground again when they launched the country's first employer-sponsored intergenerational daycare center which joins young children and seniors in a specially designed facility located at corporate headquarters. The center has separate areas and programs for each age group, but activities such as cooking and crafts bring children and elders together at various points throughout the day.

Karen Leibold, Director of Work/Family Programs for Stride Rite, spent three years developing this innovative collaboration between Stride Rite, Somerville/Cambridge Elder Services, and Wheelock College. She credits CEO Arnold Hiatt with the vision that backed the center and the company's varied family support policies. Stride Rite benefits include an 8-week paid maternity leave, an 18-week unpaid job-protected family leave which can be used for adoption or family illness, a national resource and referral program for childcare, seminars on dependent care, and a recently launched employee assistance program.

HILL HOLLIDAY: Boston

Hill Holliday, Connors, Cosmopulos, Inc., one of New England's leading advertising agencies, has a national workforce of over 400 that is 75 percent female. The agency's family supportive programs combine a daycare center (developed eight years ago) with a variety of flexible benefits that include 8-week paid maternity or adoption leave and a dependent care assistance program (DECAP) that offers a $5,000 tax-free benefit for childcare or eldercare expenses. Two recent family support initiatives offer a reduced work week and job sharing, designed primarily for mothers with young children.

Gary Stephens, Human Resources Representative, says the benefits program is informal and has evolved out of employee needs. Like Stride Rite, the force behind Hill Holliday's innovative spirit has come from the top—CEO and founder Jack Connors, who Stephens describes as "a very progressive, family-oriented person with vision and flexibility."

BETH ISRAEL HOSPITAL: Brookline

Beth Israel (BI), a major teaching hospital of Harvard Medical School, offers an expansive, more formalized flexible benefits program to meet the needs of over 5,000 employees. The BI package includes an employee wellness program, a dependent care resource and referral network, an employee assistance program, and a reimbursement account for dependent care expenses. Courses on many topics such as stress, work/family issues, and childcare options are also available.

BI's popular Earned Time (ET) program, introduced eight years ago, allows employees to combine all paid sick time, vacation time, and holiday hours into a single time bank account which can be used at their own discretion. "The BI philosophy," explains Maria Tarullo, Director of Human Resource Operations, "is creating a supportive workplace for everyone, not solely for families. While 75-80 percent of the workforce is female, 45 to 50 percent of our workforce is probably single."

The programs at BI have come out of the inspiration and vision of Dr. Mitchell Rabkin, hospital President, and Laura Avakian, Vice President of Human Resources. New programs are often shaped using representative focus groups. The most recent addition to Beth Israel's impressive repertoire is an on-site childcare center with space for 114 children.

DIGITAL EQUIPMENT CORPORATION: Maynard

The leading worldwide supplier of networked computer systems and services, Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC) has long enjoyed a reputation as an employee-responsive company. Their "Life Balance Strategy," introduced two years ago, includes a core policy called Headcount Equivalency, an innovative method that tallies the number of total employee hours worked, rather than the total number of employees. According to Laurie Margolies, Corporate Employee Relations manager, "Equivalency changes the way managers account for the time of their employees and provides greater flexibility for less than full-time work options."

While part-time and flextime work have existed at Digital for years, a second aspect of DEC's new program, Alternative Work Strategy, moves towards institutionalizing these arrangements, offering options for those returning from disability leave or pre-retirement. DEC also has a childcare resource and referral program and dependent care reimbursement.

New programs like those above typically evolve out of task forces initiated either by Corporate Personnel or by managers and employees throughout the organization. "While family issues may drive the programs," states Margolies, "they are not exclusive and respond to single people as well." Part-time work, for example, is an option at Digital for a man caring for an aging parent or an employee doing volunteer work in a community soup kitchen.

Summary

These four corporate leaders provide simple, straightforward words of advice: "Know your employees." This credo, to which Tarullo, Stephens, and Margolies ascribe, involves talking with employees on a regular basis or conducting a formal survey. "You can't assume you know what people need," cautions Tarullo.

"Know your company." This means understanding your corporate culture, your business, and where it's headed. "It's important," advises Margolies, "to find out what works at your company and how change has happened in the past."

"Do your homework." Stephens, Leibold, and Tarullo all agree that talking with other innovative companies is a good place to start. And perhaps most important is Tarullo's reminder: "You don't have to spend a lot of money to offer flexibility, access, and convenience to employees." □

Elizabeth Rosseel is Principal of Creative Work Strategies in Belmont, MA. Liz specializes in research and communications projects on work and family topics. She is currently managing the TLC Project for Harvard Community Health Plan and is a member of the Family Resource Coalition.

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by Dawn Hanson Smart

A City Grapples with Family Support: Seattle's "Family Support Opportunities For Action"

For a year, staff representatives from fifteen government departments and offices have worked together as the City of Seattle's Family Support Team to fashion a tool that would guide the City's discussion of family support issues. Beginning with a set of operating principles based on the values associated with the family support movement, the Team created a document which identifies the potential actions local government can take in the area of family support.

Seattle's *Family Support Opportunities For Action* is a work in progress—a compendium of ideas the City can pursue on behalf of its families. It includes broad goals, provides a definition of families, and identifies different roles the City can play. It gives examples of strategies Seattle already undertakes and new initiatives the City could introduce in support of families. The breadth and vision of the document make it a call to action, encouraging a municipal government to examine its unique position in supporting families and their development.

Opportunities For Action begins with the goals outlined in the accompanying box and an inclusive family definition:

> "A family is a self-defined group of people who may live together on a regular basis and who have a close, long-term, committed relationship and share or are responsible for the common necessities of life. Family members may include adult partners, dependent elders or children, as well as people related by blood or marriage."

The definition is included in a set of operating principles which encompass empowerment, a focus on prevention and early intervention, removal of barriers to service, the importance of cultural diversity, and participation of family members in planning and service delivery.

Opportunities For Action goes on to describe various roles the City can play and provides examples of relevant strategies for each one, often repeating a focus in areas where Seattle's municipal government has committed itself—health care, housing, childcare, public safety, recreation, and social development. The ten roles include:

- **Model Employer:** focusing on family-friendly policies and practices in the City workplace.
- **Advocate and Community Leader:** asking the City to be a strong voice for family support, speaking out about the importance of families to community development, and promoting family support services.
- **Service Deliverer:** identifying opportunities where the City can extend its services to families and how to incorporate family support and development principles into the direct service provided to citizens.
- **Resource Developer and Funder:** seeking the development of a community-wide system of services to address the needs of families.
- **Technical Assistance Provider:** encouraging greater capacity within local government to help agencies and organizations which deliver family support programming.
- **Planner and Coordinator:** promoting City participation in planning for local, regional, and State initiatives which benefit families.
- **Neighborhood/Economic Developer:** examining ways in which family support and development services are linked to and benefit neighborhoods and community development.
- **Policy Developer:** addressing family issues when creating policies and procedures to shape a vision of Seattle's families and their self-sufficiency.
- **Public Educator and Information Agent:** encouraging increased community knowledge of family support issues, programs, and resources.
- **Promoter of Human Rights and Cultural Diversity:** seeking opportunities to raise awareness and offer assistance in developing attitudes and behaviors consistent with these goals.
- **Enabler of Citizen Contribution and Participation:** encouraging the participation of all family members in community life.

GOALS

The City shall focus its energy and efforts to improve the quality of life, making Seattle the best possible place for families of all economic levels to live, and shall strengthen its capacity to support a diverse array of families and individuals.

1. Promote physically and emotionally healthy families.
2. Assure that families living within our community can meet their basic needs and receive the support necessary to be self-sufficient.
3. Assure a safe environment throughout Seattle for families.
4. Develop opportunities for families to live, work, play, and grow together in a multi-cultural environment that supports and promotes communication among all groups and individuals.
5. Work to attract and keep a diverse population in Seattle, which includes families with children, to ensure the city is a viable, dynamic community in the future.
6. Promote diversity within Seattle's neighborhoods and support neighborhoods that are economically, ethnically, and culturally varied.
7. Educate the public, including youth and families and elders, on the changing needs of families.
8. Promote partnerships within the community to meet the diverse and changing needs of families.

The strategies specified in the document span a wide range of activities for the City. Examples of its resource development role are the funding of community-based family support centers and emergency and transitional housing programs. As a service deliverer, the City provides childcare subsidies; health care services; sports, recreation, arts and cultural programs; and operates an adult literacy program through the Seattle Public Library. The City's advocacy role at the state and federal levels includes low income and affordable housing; health care and nutrition funding; and child support enforcement efforts. In its role as an employer, the City enacted the Family Leave Ordinance in 1989 which extends sick and bereavement leave to allow care of domestic partners or their dependents, and in 1990 expanded enrollment in medical, dental, and accidental death and dismemberment plans to cover employees' domestic partners and their dependent children.

Seattle's attempt to think broadly about families represents a growing understanding across the country that local governments have a stake in family well-being and a vast array of options to choose from in their endeavor to support families' development. Seattle has placed new emphasis on this area. Among Mayor Norman Rice's goals is one that reads: "Further strengthen Seattle's capacity to support its diverse array of families and individuals." *Opportunities For Action* illustrates ways in which this goal can be carried out and how creatively attention to family issues can be applied at the local level.

City government can use any number of approaches to support families, regardless of whether it has mandated responsibility in a particular area. For example, most family income issues are outside the realm of local control; however, municipal government can take a position on and actively promote increases in the minimum wage and public assistance benefit levels. A city can examine each area where it provides service to citizens and identify ways to incorporate family activities, parent education, or family resource information in those services. It can commit itself to a greater level of understanding about the impact of local government policies and actions on families, including its land use and zoning practices. It can serve as a role model and give attention to the family-related needs of its employees.

The work in Seattle also points out the ways in which the values of the family support movement translate into the functional operation of an institution like municipal government. Interdepartmental efforts like Seattle's Family Support Team bring together a variety of viewpoints, knowledge, and expertise and allow staff to recognize the common goals and principles which guide their actions—regardless of whether they work in police departments, public libraries, housing divisions, or health programs. The bottom up approach to planning, made possible by involving line staff and managers, provides a wealth of information and creative thought about the potential for City action. Such efforts compel staff to broaden their thinking about what's possible and identify better ways to collaborate. This begins the process of building a collective awareness about and a more unified approach to family support and development.

> ***"Seattle's attempt to think broadly about families represents a growing understanding across the country that local governments have a stake in family well-being and a vast array of options to choose from in their endeavor to support families' development."***

The work of the Family Support Team was not always easy or simple, nor was the resulting document without controversy. The definition of family, for example, stimulated discussion about the customary focus of local government on "the individual" rather than the family. Given Seattle's long-standing attention to children and youth, the definition also raised questions about the broad, inclusive emphasis on all types of families, including individuals who are not related by blood or marriage, versus a narrower focus on families with children. The tensions inherent in the alternative views of local government responsibilities and commitments prompted animated exchange among City staff and policymakers and required genuine deliberation about the ramifications of the inclusive definition.

The extensive nature of *Opportunities for Action* also provoked debate about the fiscal implications of implementation. There is a strong desire within the City to do the "right thing," to move in directions which support Mayor Rice's goals, and to be on the cutting edge of local government policy and operations. But making family support tangible carries a price tag, particularly for those strategies which involve the City as an employer. Budget realities require careful consideration of how to proceed, where to start, and how to set priorities among the many initiatives.

The full implications of *Family Support Opportunities For Action* for the City of Seattle are yet to be seen. The document is viewed as a working tool that sets a positive direction and complements other policies and efforts already underway to serve the community. It gives the City a way to acknowledge what is being done now as well as what could be done. Policymakers recognize the potential for change that the document could inspire. There is encouragement to pursue the direction set by *Opportunities For Action*, acting across departments to carry out current efforts more collaboratively and to explore ways to initiate new strategies over time. There is recognition that in times of budget constraints, sharing a more unified vision and some common goals for families will help target efforts more appropriately.

The City is examining the next steps to be taken with *Opportunities for Action*. There is consensus that the broad definition acknowledges the importance of choice, supports diversity, and emphasizes the role that families and social groupings play in providing support to their members. There is agreement about the use and promotion of the broad definition and efforts will be made to raise the level of awareness regarding this definition within City departments. There will be further work done to determine how best to apply the approaches suggested in *Opportunities For Action* in concert with other City priorities. There will be work done to review current efforts and identify potential conflicts with a family-supportive approach. The Family Support Team will continue to discuss how to integrate the goals, values, and strategies into City operations and develop and coordinate new initiatives in the future.

Seattle's *Family Support Opportunities For Action* represents one city's attempt to focus its energy on families—to explore creative approaches to family support and find ways to improve the quality of life for families. Although final results are still uncertain, it is clear that the work of the Family Support Team has stimulated thought and debate about the importance of families and how city government actions affect their well-being in Seattle. □

Dawn Hanson Smart is Senior Planner in the City of Seattle's Human Services Strategic Planning Office and worked with more than twenty-five other city staff to develop the Family Support Opportunities For Action. *Copies of the working document can be obtained by writing or calling: City of Seattle, Human Services Strategic Planning Office, 618 2nd Avenue, Room 1350, Seattle, WA 98104; 206/684-8057. HSSPO is an organizational member of the Family Resource Coalition.*

by Susan Taylor-Brown

AIDS: The Reality in All Our Lives

The media portrays Human Immunodeficiency Virus, HIV, as a disease of "others"—homosexuals, intravenous drug users, the poor, and ethnic/cultural minorities. By separating those who are infected from the rest of society, many people feel they are not at risk. But the virus does not discriminate; it seeks to infect anyone. It looks for an available host regardless of sex, social class, or ethnicity. One need only look at the increasing heterosexual infection rate to realize how misleading earlier reports were that stated heterosexuals were not in danger.

AIDS—Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome—is the end stage of the virus. It is currently a disease without a cure, making pandemic progress throughout the world, affecting more and more individuals and impairing the ability of families to function normally. Already, more than one million people in the United States alone are infected. No one group is a group at risk; it is sexual or drug use behaviors that expose the majority to infection. Ignorance and misleading information prevent people from taking precautions and staying safe. Prevention is the only tool we have to stop the spread of HIV.

The family support movement and its programs are ideally suited to effectively educate families about the disease and encourage a compassionate response to those who need nurturing as they cope with affected family members combating HIV infection.

This article describes HIV disease, ways to prevent transmission of the virus, the psychosocial issues confronting families, and how family resource programs can be a factor in the prevention/support efforts.

Facts about HIV

The AIDS pandemic is embedded in fear and misunderstanding. Too many families are coping with this illness in shame, isolation, and silence because they fear friends and neighbors will not support them. Can you imagine caring for a loved one without support? Or, not being able to tell others how or of what a loved one died?

Education is the key to reducing people's fear. Facts replace fear with understanding and concern. As people learn more about the illness, the more effective they can be in caring for an infected person.

- First, there are key terms related to HIV:

AIDS: the end stage of HIV disease (in which the body's ability to fight infection breaks down)
AFRAIDS: the acquired fear of AIDS, referring to the irrational response to and stigma of AIDS
HIV+: the individual has been exposed to HIV and may or may not be sick
HIV disease: although AIDS is the more commonly used term, HIV represents the full spectrum of the illness from diagnosis to end-stage illness. AIDS
ELISA/Western Blot Tests: blood tests that screen for HIV antibodies in the blood stream; these tests are often called the "AIDS test"

- Specifically, people need to know that HIV is most commonly transmitted by:
  - sex with an infected person
  - needles and/or syringes used by an infected person
  - pregnancy, birth, or breastfeeding if the mother is infected
  - transfusions of infected blood, blood products, or organ transplants (before 1985).

Equally important, people need to be aware that the virus is *not* spread by mosquitos, eating food prepared by someone who is HIV+, or any other form of casual contact. Remember, for all the people who have cared for an HIV-infected family member, no one has contracted the virus.

Today, there is hope for those who are HIV-infected. Early diagnosis and treatment of the infection leads to improved survival. Care is shifting from a terminal illness model to a chronic illness model. As people survive longer, their needs change. For example, more infected children will survive until school age. Since HIV disease is one of the leading causes of developmental disabilities among children, many will need specialized services.

Families need information—presented in clearly stated, ethnically sensitive ways—about preventing the spread of HIV and help in changing at-risk behaviors. Adolescents, who are a reservoir for the virus, need to learn about how to stay safe—including safer sex practices (including abstinence), clean needle use, and the role of alcohol and drugs. For example, many adolescents do not identify themselves as homosexuals even though they engage in same-sex activity. Because this pandemic involves two societal taboos—sex and drugs—we need to work together toward talking more openly about these behaviors. The consequence of not doing so means losing more of our youth to HIV.

Family support programs can play a key role in helping families learn this vital information which can be integrated into many existing programs. Additionally, HIV-affected families need to know that family resource programs will help them fight the proliferation of this terrible virus, support them as they care for their loved ones, and help to decrease their isolation.

The Lives of HIV-Affected Women

I co-facilitate two support groups for women from HIV-affected families: an HIV+ Women's Group and a Three Generational Group consisting of women who are taking care of HIV-infected family members. These groups are offered at the Community Health Network, a community-based AIDS care facility.

HIV+ Women's Group: This psychoeducational group for women living with the virus lets them share their concerns and enhance their coping skills. A dominant theme is the sense of isolation and shame. Many have not told their families

or friends because they worry about rejection, and feel shame—factors that limit their ability to cope. Within the group, however, women are able to share their experiences, problem-solve concerns, and plan for the future, thriving on the mutual support and encouragement. The strength of these women is admirable. A recent study found that all group members felt they were either stronger or much stronger since the diagnosis of their infection.

Women who are able to disclose their situation, and do receive support, find it empowering. Throughout the course of the illness, various support services help family members care for each other and preserve the family unit. When dealing with an acute opportunistic infection, for instance, the infected women need support in maintaining their families and children may need special attention while their mothers obtain medical care.

The women's group felt that *their* mothers, who are frequently the primary source of support, could benefit from a similar outlet for their experiences as caretakers. A *Three Generational Support Group* evolved which has grown to include grandmothers, mothers, wives, sisters, and significant others who are caretaking an infected family member. Describing feelings of being cut off from their communities, many have not been able to share the burden of the diagnosis even with close family members. As a result, these caretakers feel weighted down by the responsibility and ambivalence of disclosure. Typically, when the diagnosis is disclosed, reactions include: "Why didn't you tell me earlier?" or "I can't believe it," which is frequently coupled with an inability to support the family.

One of the most difficult tasks for caretakers is shifting from aggressive medical care to palliative care when death is imminent. This transition is a major challenge for families and providers alike, and at these times the group is particularly helpful. Some of the women have lost their infected family members; for others, their relatives are newly diagnosed. The group offers each woman a chance to see the full range of the illness and its demands; by sharing their coping skills and reaching out to each other, the women gain strength and grow from the experience.

For many, the group is the only place they can talk openly about the impact of HIV on their lives, even sharing humorous incidents without embarrassment. Laughter helps the women release some of the emotional intensity they're experiencing and they learn to use humor as a vital source of energy and solace.

How Family Resource Programs Can Be Helpful in Serving HIV-Affected Families

- Develop an HIV policy: implement it before a case arises.
- Provide HIV-training: All staff members need ongoing HIV education. Unless people understand AIDS and AFRAIDS, they will avoid dealing with the problem.
- Serve as a prevention center: Provide HIV brochures and programs for participating families. AIDS education should be a part of all parenting series: AIDS-related posters and artwork can be a good stimulus for AIDS discussions. AIDS will only be stopped when people have accurate information; parents of adolescents are an ideal target group for education.
- Provide a compassionate response: HIV-affected families need help in coping with this life-threatening illness. Each program can develop community outreach efforts that will help families feel supported.
- Encourage people to talk about their fears: AIDS is highly stigmatized. Opening and honestly exploring the issues will help staff support affected families.
- Be a community leader: Help other agencies and organizations fight this pandemic by openly addressing the issues.

Common Questions That Arise in Developing A Program

Where do I get accurate HIV information for our program? Contact your local health department, AIDS Task Force, or State Hotline. These agencies will let you know who is providing AIDS education locally.

AIDS isn't a concern for our program; how do I get people involved? AIDS is affecting our total society. It is not a disease of others, it is affecting us all. First, educate your staff and participants about the importance of spreading the facts about HIV. Then, join the fight against AIDS. Each of us can affect the course of the pandemic.

Will other families leave our program if we serve HIV-affected families? Your participants have the same need for HIV disease education as your staff. An ongoing educational program will help families and staff alike answer their questions. The more people understand how HIV is spread, the less likely they are to reject HIV-affected families.

Conclusion

AIDS is a reality in all our lives. This article calls for family resource programs to take a leadership role in combating the disease. By responding compassionately, each one of us can improve the environment for HIV-affected families and each of us can be significantly enriched by the experience. □

Resources

NATIONAL AIDS HCTLINE
24 hours, 7 days a week 1-800/342-AIDS or 1-800/344-SIDA (for Spanish-speaking callers).

ASSOCIATION FOR THE CARE OF CHILDREN IN HOSPITALS—developed Pediatric AIDS film and publishes other material. 7910 Woodmont Ave., Suite 300 Bethesda, MD 20814

NATIONAL AIDS INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE P.O. Box 6003, Department HIC Rockville, MD 20850 1-800/458-5231.

Books/Articles

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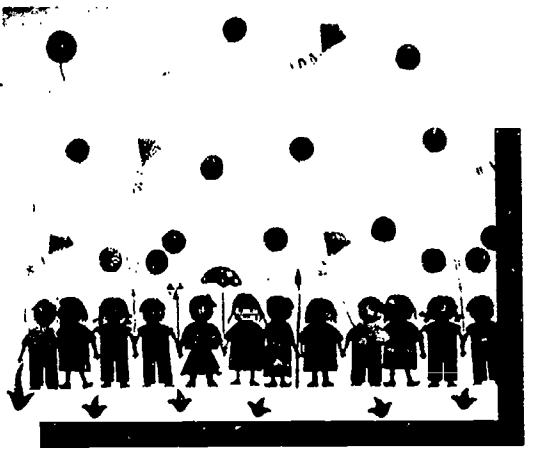
My Friend end AIDS (1989). Parker, CO: A Way with Words. 303/220-7060. For children to understand AIDS.

Dr. Susan Taylor-Brown is an Assistant Professor of Social Work at Syracuse University. She specializes in the impact of HIV on women and children and is happy to answer questions on the subject. Dr. Taylor-Brown is a member of the Family Resource Coalition.

Contact her at: 110 Brockway Hall, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY 13244 716/248-0268.

■ by Jamy Black McCole



The Volunteer Payoff: Getting as Well as Giving

Social service organizations throughout the country are struggling with a difficult challenge: community and family needs are increasing as funding sources appear to be decreasing.

In Tarrant County, Texas, the 16-year old Parenting Guidance Center (PGC) provides comprehensive counseling and education services to more than 27,000 individuals each year. Trained volunteers are the key workforce factor that enable us to deliver programs in an environment of tight money and a growing complexity of needs.

PGC's mission is to prevent child abuse and neglect by promoting better parenting skills in a long-range strategy that significantly impacts social problems and enhances the quality of life for parents and children. In 1990, volunteers delivered direct services to 14,633 clients through three programs:

- Parent Partners, a support system in which volunteers work one-on-one with abusive parents
- PEPS, a week-long parenting education curriculum for secondary school students
- CEV, community level workshops and classes on positive parenting techniques

PGC recruits its volunteers three times each year through the use of local newspaper ads and proposals to volunteer and community organizations that require their members to perform volunteer services. Applicants interview individually with the director of volunteers, and job descriptions and responsibilities for each program are reviewed. Individuals drop out at this point if they cannot handle the responsibility required, or they may decide or be guided to volunteer in support services rather than direct service.

After recruitment, volunteers attend their choice of morning or evening general orientation and training taught by PGC clinical and education staff. The nine-hour training first reviews PGC's mission, goals, program descriptions, and organizational chart. Sessions also review the value of volunteering, the issues of child abuse and neglect, the Texas Family Code, child development, and communication skills. Next, volunteers attend an additional nine hours of specialized training for the program with which they've decided to work.

The Parent Partner program carefully matches a volunteer with a parent under stress; the relationship focuses on parents and *their* needs during a time when most services and attention received by the family are child-focused. The partner spends quantity as well as quality time with the parent, giving encouragement, emotional support, information about parenting, and referrals to other community resources. A partner may help a parent apply for food stamps, obtain dental care for a child, or learn to relax and play with the child. Individuals training to be Parent Partners cover the dynamics of abusive and neglectful parents, reflective listening, and skills for problem-solving conversations.

Volunteers with the Parenting Education Program in Schools (PEPS) teach a series of five sessions about the responsibilities of being a parent, definitions of abuse and how to report it, and positive family communication. Using videotapes and straight talk, PEPS volunteers go to all health classes in three school districts in Terrant County, reaching 9,000 students each year. PEPS training includes classroom management, effective presentation, a detailed review of PEPS curriculum, and classroom observation.

Community Education Volunteers (CEVs) teach positive parenting techniques through workshops and classes at the Parenting Guidance Center and other community organizations. Topics for parents of children from birth to 18 years of age include baby basics and child development, positive techniques for discipline, communication, and building a child's self-esteem. Other courses cover special situations such as single parenting, stepparenting, and adoptive parenting. CEV training teaches techniques of group management and skills for public speaking. During the training, CEVs determine their favorite parenting topics and presentation style and attend specific courses before teaching them. Course outlines provide guidance but allow a volunteer many choices in organizing curriculum materials.

Getting and Giving

Several factors ensure the success of volunteers in direct service: the first is recognizing the best spot for utilizing the volunteer. Next, program design allows for individual preference and varied delivery. And third, each program that incorporates volunteers is staffed by a program/volunteer coordinator who schedules the volunteers, is easily accessible, and talks regularly with the volunteer to receive input on that individual's progress and provide guidance or support. The coordinator also provides direct program services in the same capacity as the volunteer and thus knows firsthand what is involved in doing the job. A newsletter and in-service training are provided quarterly. Additionally, specific continuing education for each program area is provided.

Is the effort worth it? You bet it is! Rewards abound for the volunteer and the agency. Sally Hopper, a long-time volunteer points out, "As volunteers we get back as much as we give. It's very satisfying and meaningful to be involved in the cause of reducing child abuse and to help make a difference in another parent's life. When one does this work, you find out how much you're valued by PGC and the people you help, and the training we receive can be used in many other situations in our own lives—both professionally and personally."

Some volunteers are considering career changes, completing field placements as students, or fulfilling required service as a member of an organization such as the Junior League. Volunteers also become stronger advocates for prevention of child abuse, promote positive public relations for the agency, and bring new ideas to share.

More people—more ideas—reaching more parents! □

Jamy Black McCole is Director of Education at Parenting Guidance Center. Contact her at: 2928 W. Fifth St., Fort Worth, TX 76107 817/332-6348. Parenting Guidance Center is a member of the Family Resource Coalition.

by Peg Brokaw and Linda Fries

Grandparents Parenting Grandchildren

Each Friday evening, Jane participates in a support group at a local youth and family center while her husband George sits with their grandchildren. She wonders out loud how she could make it without this group of other grandparents who parent their grandchildren. Jane and her husband are part of a growing number of older parents who are now raising their children's children.

Jessie was awarded legal custody of her two-year old granddaughter who was abandoned by her drug addicted father. Sixteen-year old Steve lives with his grandparents because his single, working mother was unable to control his aggressive behaviors. Mrs. Jones provides childcare for three of her grandchildren while their parents work. Sandra has informal custody of two preschool-age grandchildren while their mother receives services to help her leave an abusive relationship. Mr. and Mrs. Barns's daughter and two children live with them following their daughter's divorce. These grandparents find themselves changing diapers, packing lunches, or going to parent conferences during "the golden years of retirement."

The Problem

Unfortunately, these case histories are becoming more common. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, 3 million children (5 percent of all American children under the age of 18) live in their grandparents' homes; 30 percent of those 3 million children have no parent living with them. Two-thirds of mothers with children under 18 and over 50 percent of mothers with children under 6 are employed away from the home; the Children's Defense Fund states that 46 percent of childcare is provided by relatives. In all probability it is grandparents who provide much of that childcare.

The era of the nuclear family has come to a close. The increase in divorce, single-parent families, female-headed families, two career families, poverty, and drug and alcohol addiction have forced dramatic changes in the childrearing patterns of America's families. Across the nation families reach out to grandparents for assistance. Grandparents are more available to help due to increased longevity and the improvement in the health of these aging Americans. Whether it be through legal procedures or informal arrangements, grandparents are more and more becoming a bridge between generations where parents have become unavailable to parent their children.

The Need

Many childrearing practices have changed since these grandparents raised their own children, and current standards and methods continue to do so. Medical information about childhood diseases, inoculations, safety, and home nursing procedures are different now, and grandparents may need assistance in educating themselves about those changes. Accessability to programs of support is a major issue for all parents, and especially for grandparent "parents" who may also experience feelings of frustration, guilt, and isolation with their new roles of raising grandchildren. What did they do wrong in raising their own children that those children are unable to raise their children? Counseling and support services to help with these feelings are needed.

Just as parents do, grandparents have their own developmental needs which will require various services depending on the age and life stage of the grandparent. Employment and budget services, pre-retirement education, recreational activities, and interaction with peers are examples of developmental services that may be useful to a grandparent raising grandchildren.

Legal services are essential for those who have formal or informal custody of their grandchildren. Grandparents need answers to questions like: How can medical insurance be provided? Are grandparents eligible for public assistance programs? What visitation rights must parents have? What rights do grandparents have?

Here and there are groups that provide piecemeal services to grandparents who are raising their grandchildren. Some of them help with legal concerns, mental health counseling, or offer support groups. Others have traditionally worked with "bridged" families without identifying them as a special population. However, there don't seem to be organizations/agencies that have developed comprehensive programs to meet the diverse needs of these grandparent "parents."

Recommendations

Family resource centers are in position to invite these "bridged" families into their existing programs, to provide services directly or give access to services. A family resource center that plans to design a comprehensive program for grandparent "parents" should consider offering the following components or finding them within the community:

- classes or media presentations on current, appropriate child development stages/ages and parenting skills
- classes or media presentations on nutrition and home health hints
- child/"parent" programs which link the grandparent to other parents with similar aged children
- support groups which link grandparents with their peers who are also "parenting" again
- counseling, both for the person the grandparent is and for the "new parent" the grandparent has become
- classes or workshops for personal growth and development
- availability of legal counseling and services
- times and places for the above which coordinate with most family schedules and with local transportation

Family resource centers have been successfully providing support to many types of American families. "Bridged" families are another variation which should now be included in family resource center programs. □

For specific information, contact: Linda Fries or Peg Brokaw, PARENT RESOURCES, Inc., PO Box 12531, Tucson AZ 85732-2531. Both are members of the Board of Directors; Parent Resources, Inc. is a member of the Family Resource Coalition.

■ by Melinda Tarbox-Reitman

Supporting What Works

Project SEEK, standing for Success with Early Education before Kindergarten, is Rockford, Illinois's (District 205) state-funded prekindergarten program for 3- and 4-year olds. Its students are identified as being at risk of failing in school through an outreach educational screening process conducted at locations throughout the city.

There are more than 26,000 functionally illiterate adults, 18 years of age and older, residing in the greater Rockford metropolitan area, and many of these adults are the parents of children served by Project SEEK. The initial demographic search for SEEK students establishes the program as a community-wide endeavor by arranging for the screenings in comfortable, non-threatening environments that at-risk families have come to trust—community and daycare centers, branch libraries, elementary schools, and often a neighborhood fire station. And so it begins, our children are identified and assigned to classrooms, transported if necessary, and given what we believe to be the very finest first educational experience.

The SEEK program has grown in five years from serving 86 children to serving 750 children and their families, with a waiting list of 200 children. The staff consists of 25 teaching teams operating at 11 sites scattered across Rockford in 25 classrooms. In addition, SEEK also includes 9 home-based teachers, 4 family community outreach workers, a screening coordinator, a curriculum coordinator, a toy-lending librarian, and a nurse. We are 70 individuals philosophically committed to the positive impact that the High/Scope curriculum can have on all children, but most particularly on those at risk.

Project SEEK is committed to the belief that child change without family change is ineffective. Therefore, parent education and involvement are major components of the program and begin with the same complex method of assessment used in programming for children. Along with family assessment and development, SEEK'S family community outreach workers facilitate weekly parent support groups which deal with information surrounding parenting and child development issues and also address literacy, employment, economic, and health issues as well as family, social, and emotional concerns.

Parents involved in these support groups become certified in Active Parenting, a curriculum designed by Michael Popkin, Ph.D., and those who attend are awarded coupons with which they can purchase clothing, books, and toys from the SEEK boutique where the inventory has been donated by the community at large.

What makes Project SEEK unique is the interagency cooperation it receives throughout the community. Each staff member has a hand in educating Rockford about SEEK and each one brings a personal networking system to the program that is extremely helpful in achieving community joint efforts. A collaboration with Head Start, for example, has flourished since the Project's inception and has provided encouragement, support, and information to SEEK staff. The success of this linkage was recognized early in the relationship by the presentation of the Human Resources/Head Start Public Service Award to Rockford District 205 for commitment to low-income children demonstrated by the work of Project SEEK.

SEEK has instituted an aggressive effort to cooperate and collaborate with other childcare providers who are concerned with the education, welfare, health, and safety needs of young children. Responding to the concerns of a local NAEYC affiliate, a committee entitled HIDE (Helping Individuals Develop Exceptionally) and SEEK was formed in 1986 to establish a dialogue between the public schools and the community's daycare centers.

The Family Abuse Consultation Team (FACT) is another example of cooperation in which a group of professionals volunteer to periodically devote lunch hour sessions to brainstorming alternatives for particularly difficult cases presented to them by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. The FACT team brings this multidisciplinary, multiagency team of professionals together to examine all possible resources for intervening with seemingly irremediable problems in families. Project SEEK's coordinator has been involved with FACT since its inception.

Linkages with community agencies is a Project SEEK goal which has been realized through subcontracts with the agencies that provide comprehensive services to children and families: the Department of Human Resources; the City of Rockford; Orten Keyes and the Rockford daycare centers; and the Family Learning Network which includes the Rockford library's literacy support program, the optional education and truancy initiatives, the adult and alternative education program and attendance initiative programs within the school district, and the Department of Children and Family Services' Project Chance and Title XX daycare.

Like all communities we are flawed; we have been criticized as not prioritizing education. Those of us who believe that education is the hope of the future see Project SEEK as the hope of the Rockford public schools. The real reason I believe Project SEEK receives unconditional support from the community is, it's easy to support what works. High/Scope curriculum works, teachers making home visits works. Family assessment and development works. Active Parenting works. Operating out of a positive bias works. Building self-esteem works, and without self-esteem all learning is lost. □

Melinda Tarbox-Reitman, Master Adoptive Parent for the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, Rockford region, currently serves as Family Community Outreach Worker for Project SEEK. She is a strong advocate of licensing all parents and empowering rather than enabling families, most particularly those at risk. She lives in Rockford with her family and can be contacted at 1620 Huffman Blvd., Rockford, IL 61103 815/964-0942. Melinda is a member of the Family Resource Coalition.

■ by Martha Burchell

Operation Desert Storm and Desert Shield: Families Coping with the Realities of War

The mission of the Honolulu Armed Services YMCA is to assist the junior enlisted community through programs, services, education, and emotional support. On September 17, 1990, shortly after the first deployment of some 8,000 Marines from Kaneohe Marine Corps Air Station, the Armed Services YMCA initiated Operation Rainbow, a series of existing and new programs providing special help to the Hawaii-based families of deployed military personnel.

The average age of the single soldier, sailor, or airman using Armed Services YMCA facilities is 18 years old. Those with families are in the 18-22 year-old range. Many of these young people, who had signed up for military service in peacetime, were not even born when the Viet Nam conflict took place. The single enlisted military personnel of today's troops, and the families in particular, were ill-equipped to cope with the reality of separation and war.

The first impact of Desert Shield and later Desert Storm was felt at Kaneohe Marine Corps Air Station. All programs and activities were quickly evaluated in order to meet the immediate needs of families involved in the Middle East War. All swap meets, excursions, and craft classes were suspended, and focus was given to support groups and individual problem solving. The Waiting Wives support groups were expanded (programs for young women faced with the stress of separation from home, family, and spouse), and a new Pregnant Waiting Wives group was developed.

Special attention was given to more than 109 pregnant women at Kaneohe who would deliver babies during their husband's deployment. Emphasis was placed on lending strong emotional support to these women and even providing substitute lamaze coaches at time of delivery. Of particular help at this time was the Welcome Baby Program, an existing home visitation service designed to educate young mothers-to-be on the importance of good nutrition and prenatal and infant care.

As the deployment expanded throughout Oahu, the effects were felt at other installations. At Aliamanu Military Reservation, for example, where assistance is offered to military personnel from all branches of service, clients not only requested more Waiting Wives groups, but also asked for a support group that would include children. These youngsters needed the added security of participating with others who were experiencing similar feelings of stress related to family upheaval.

Additionally, the Armed Services YMCA provided excellent children's programs such as Play Morning and 3 Plus 4. The Play Morning mobile unit goes into the military neighborhoods offering recreational and educational programs. The 3 Plus 4 Program serves as an introduction to the preschool environment in which a child learns to interact with other children as well as acquire basic skills. The demand for these classes at all Armed Services YMCA outreach branches increased immediately because the parents' focus was directed to maintaining family stability during separation.

Childcare became a serious issue as one or both parents were deployed. The military stepped up to this problem with an organized plan for care, and the armed services YMCA helped with networking for caregivers and by supporting the parents' emotional needs.

Throughout the Armed Services YMCA network, the Welcome Baby Program was given top priority and modifications were made to meet individual needs. In some cases, the home visitors extended the visitations until the new mother was secure in caring for her infant as a single parent. In compiling client statistics, it was found that more than half the women in the program were foreign-born spouses. Many had limited English language skills, were adjusting to life in a new country, and were very dependent on their partners for transportation, communication, and support. The Home Visitor, therefore, served as an extended family member and led many of these women to the Armed Services YMCA English as a Second Language class. Some of these women were later able to obtain a driver's license and become more self-sufficient.

Finances, always an issue for the younger families in Hawaii, became a more serious concern when a spouse was deployed. The cost of long-distance telephone calls to and from Saudi Arabia posed a real problem. Fortunately, help was made available through a fund created by the community.

During Operation Desert Shield, the numbers of young sailors visiting the Pearl Harbor Singles Drop-in center and Sand Island Coast Guard Base increased. These young people were seeking a safe, homelike setting where they could find the support and friendship of other Navy personnel. The centers extended their hours of operation and offered a wholesome, alcohol-free environment where they could relax, participate in recreational activities, watch television, or just read a book.

The exceptional support of the Oahu community—including individuals, corporations, military-related organizations, and the military command itself—was instrumental in helping to carry out the Armed Services YMCA's mission. Although recreation programs have been restored at the outreach branches, Operation Rainbow does not end with peace in the Middle East. It must be noted that some Oahu troops are still deployed, and the Armed Services YMCA continues to lend a hand to the families who are coping with the hardship of separation and in need of a strong support network. □

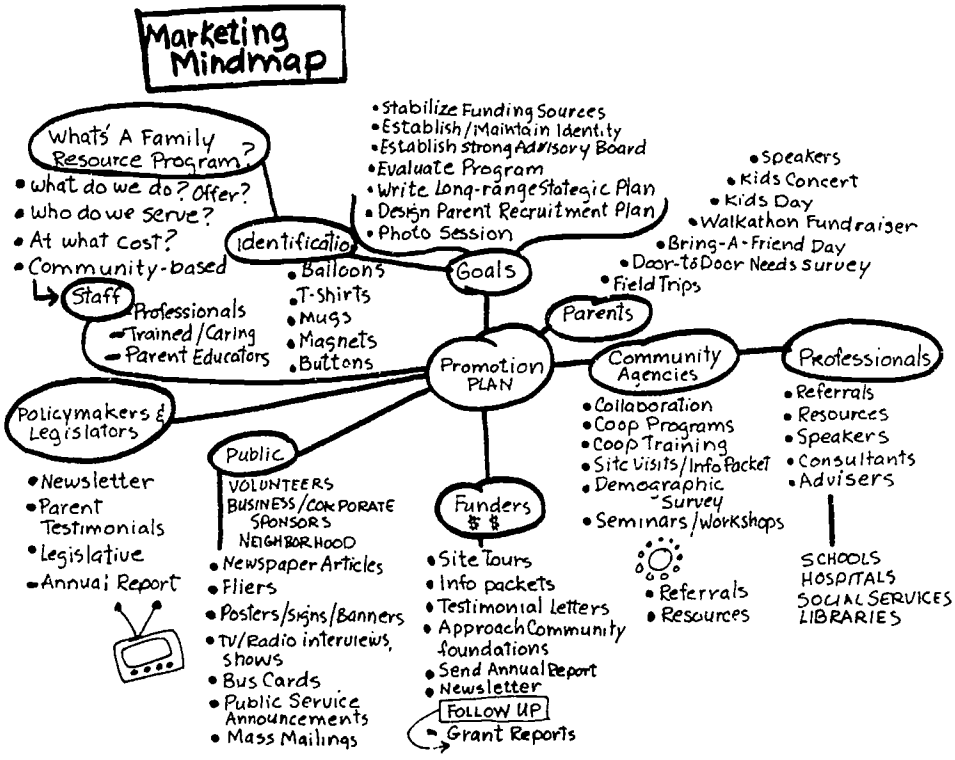
Armed Services YMCA

Martha Burchell is Executive Director of the Honolulu Armed Services YMCA, currently administering outreach facilities at six locations. Her education in recreation administration and psychology has been preparation for a 20-year career in management of family services. In the 1970s she began a network of YMCA field stations around Oahu, and started educational, recreational, and support group programs for families of young married enlisted personnel. In 1986, Martha became the only woman Executive Director of a major Armed Services YMCA facility in the United States.

Contact Martha at: Armed Services YMCA, 810 Richards St., Suite 719, Honolulu, HI 96813 808/524-5600.

■ by Elizabeth J. Sandell

Attracting Participants and Money:
A 10-Step Marketing Plan for Family Resource Programs



Marketing and promotion happen all the time: through your center's letterhead and business cards, when the receptionist greets visitors or puts callers on hold, by the layout of your space, and the style of your landscaping. Marketing is "a process that helps you exchange something of value for something else" (Stern), a process that clarifies the perceptions, attitudes, ideas, beliefs, and feelings that others have about your agency.

On the other hand, promotion is the series of actions you take to get people to respond to the marketing. Promotion is "the never-ending effort to get information about your program to the markets you seek to inform or to attract" (Sandell). A promotional plan translates vision into reality and improves services. This article outlines an intentional marketing process for family resource programs.

Step 1: Define Your Mission in One or Two Sentences

Specify who you are, with whom you work, how you want to be viewed. After years of service, a mission may require refinement. Include the staff, participants, volunteers, board members, neighborhood and agency staff representatives in drafting this important statement.

The term "family resource program" may be ambiguous. Do you provide money? Or food? Or referral and support? In general, the St. Paul Schools Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) provides parent education because parents are their children's first and most important teachers. A variation on this ECFE mission statement is posted at the entrance of each neighborhood site.

Step 2: Define Your Product in One or Two Sentences

Describe what you do, where you do this, who you serve, and what the services cost. The product should match the mission and the needs of the community. Consider what makes your service unique among the choices your clients face.

For example, ECFE is public school-sponsored, neighborhood-based, and universally available. ECFE helps any parent of a child, from birth to enrollment in kindergarten, to develop practical and developmentally appropriate parenting skills through group discussion and parent-child interaction. As one parent put it, ECFE explores "the instructions that don't come with children." ECFE developed neighborhood programs to provide support and referral in attractive and accessible settings (e.g., storefronts, day-care centers, and schools), but the form of a product can change over time. In recent years, for instance, the arrival of thousands of Southeast Asian refugees in Minnesota meant that the format of some parent education evolved from discussion groups to family literacy programming.

Step 3: Develop Your Slogan in a Few Words

Brainstorm words to describe the core of your program. What makes your services meaningful and memorable? The "boilerplate" statement or slogan that results should appear on all printed material. Some ECFE programs use: "Come for your child; stay for yourself." Others emphasize that they are "providing information and support."

Step 4: Describe Your Target Markets

These are the audiences for your marketing plan: participants, professionals, policymakers, and the general public. Consider their numbers, demographic and social characteristics, zip codes, and values. How do your clients make their decisions? Do they want to be better parents? Do they want to get out of the house? Think about what your program will cost your target markets. Will income-eligibility guidelines cost clients in positive self-esteem? Are other organizations willing to collaborate if past experience has shown that their staff members "jump ship" and join your agency? Will policymakers redirect limited funds from other programming to support your services? What will convince them to act?

Step 5: Define Your Marketing Goals

These may include action goals as well as image goals, with a balance between current needs and long-range values.

Action goals for ECFE would include:

a. Receive at least ten referrals each week

b. Stabilize funding within two years

c. Attract 50 people to the grand opening

Image goals would include:

a. Establish (or maintain) our identity in the community

b. Remind the public that we are a universally available program, rather than an income-targeted program

c. Show that our participant demographics reflect the population demographics

Step 6: Brainstorm Possible Marketing Activities

Develop a marketing task force or steering committee to generate ideas. Ask others about what attracts and informs them: "How did you hear about us? What prompted you to try our services?" ECFE used mindmaps to generate and organize our brainstorming. (Several ideas, with a mindmap, are included with this article; doubtless, you will think of many more.)

Step 7: Match Your Marketing Activities to Your Audiences and to Your Budget

a. Each audience or target market has special circumstances and sensitivities. It seems obvious, yet should be emphasized, that with print promotion, the photographs and language must reflect the cultural background of the potential clients. Often transportation, childcare, and substantial snacks are essential to remove barriers to participation for many families.

b. Some promotional efforts will reach certain clients more effectively. For example, teen parents often maintain more consistent attendance when incentives are provided, such as T-shirts, children's books or toys, or field trips.

c. Consider the shelf life of an item. A card with space for emergency telephone numbers (and, not incidentally, your program's name and phone number) may stay attached to the refrigerator longer if it includes children's artwork. Parent-child activity cards can function as business cards.

d. Try to provide programming that doubles as outreach. For example, a family library storyhour or a newspaper column informs and involves parents. as well as promotes your services.

Step 8: Create Your Marketing Activity Plan

This is the fun part! Decide who will do what, when they will do it, and what resources they will use. The plan should be reasonable, attainable, measurable, and flexible. (Several components of a marketing plan are illustrated with this article.)

Step 9: Implement Your Marketing Activity Plan

More fun! Deliver your services as promised while you follow through on the marketing plan. Make changes and adaptations as needed, Repeat the promotional activities consistently and often for maximum effect. Publicize your progress with others.

Step 10: Evaluate Your Marketing Effectiveness

Monitor your plan and receive feedback:

a. Track inquiries. Use a fictitious name in your publicity. When callers ask for "Kathy" and talk with the real reception-, Mary, you'll learn that they are responding to your listing on the supermarket bulletin board. Code your flyers with 1 dot for direct mail, 2 dots for home visits, and 3 dots for agency referrals. Ask new participants to tell you how many dots were on their flyer, and you'll know which method brought in which clients.

b. Enlist the help of an anonymous, mystery client to visit your site. When she reports her experience, you can consider how to make your program more user friendly.

c. Determir your use rate—the number of participants divided by your program's capacity. Any gaps will help you focus your marketing efforts.

d. Use client satisfaction and demographic surveys to find out if you are attracting, keeping, and serving the population you intended.

A List of Marketing and Promotion Ideas for Family Resource Programs

- Train volunteers for home visits
- Join professional networks
- Set up tours of the program site
- Support and recognize volunteers
- Create program calendars with children's art
- Write a series of articles for minority media
- Create program letterhead and business cards
- Make presentations to prenatal classes
- Use specialty advertising: T-shirts, magnets, bookbags, mugs
- Use resource listings and the phone book
- Visit well-baby clinics and food banks
- Use a van labeled with your program's information
- Sponsor family concerts and field trips
- Improve your program's space environment

Ideas for a Marketing Action Plan

- Maintain the mailing list and update it each May
- Write flyers for classes and produce them each quarter
- Create informational packages for site visitors and legislators
- Produce articles for local newspapers
- Make door-to-door visits each quarter
- Produce monthly calendars of drop-in family activities with many simple graphics
- Invite legislators and Board members to visit

About Mindmaps

Mindmaps use the creative abilities of the left brain in a natural way to problem solve and organize ideas in the brainstorming process. The maps not only expand ideas but help to set tasks and action plans for fundraising, programming, long-range planning, or special events. As we work individually or in small groups, they also help us discover repeat patterns. If you see the same idea emerge often, that is probably a key concept to incorporate into your plan.

To create a mindmap, write and circle a key word in the middle of the paper. Let your mind wander. Each time you think of a new idea, draw a spoke out from the center and write or draw that idea at the end of the line. The mindmap will begin to look like a wheel hub. Then draw smaller spokes, like branches, to show more detailed relationships. Use colored pens to code the associations you find. Draw pictures if they help you visualize ideas.

Finally, in your marketing plan, remember the 3-30-3 principle: You have 3 seconds to get someone's attention, 30 seconds to get their interest, and 3 minutes for them to consider your ideas and decide! Given that reality, an intentional marketing and promotional plan can help family programs focus their efforts more clearly and use their resources most effectively. □

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Marketing Resources

FAMILY INFORMATION SERVICES
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LEARNING RESOURCES NETWORK
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913/539-5376

- *Marketing Workbook for Non-profit Organizations*
- *Strategic Planning Workbook for Non-profit Organizations*

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FAMILY RESOURCE COALITION

MAY IN CHICAGO

Come Ready to Network and Learn. Leave Ready for Monday Morning.

When you commit your valuable time and hard-to-come-by resources to a conference, you want to leave *inspired*. You want your mind to *race* with what we call "Monday morning ideas"—all those things you want to try just as soon as you get back to work.

However you work with families—in a family support program or school; in a religious or health care setting; as a therapist, policymaker, or academician—the Family Resource Coalition conference is the only national gathering which brings together such a wide range of top-notch professionals with a common interest in family support.

Whether you are an experienced family support veteran or a newcomer who wants to learn from the best, you'll find colleagues who are wrestling with some of the same issues and challenges you face. You'll hear from the leading thinkers in the field and you'll meet people with a track record in making programs work.

Here at the Coalition, we're doing everything we can to make sure you leave *full* of Monday morning ideas. Why not do everything *you* can to make sure you're there?

THE FAMILY RESOURCE COALITION'S 4th NATIONAL CONFERENCE

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